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Abraham Lincoln's Contemporaries

Allan Pinkerton

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

When Chicago Was Young

By Herma Clark.

Letters from Martha Freeman Esmond to her friend, Julia Boyd of New York.

Chicago, March 5, 1881.

DEAR JULIA:
We have been reading President Garfield's inaugural address. Will thinks it dignified and full of wisdom, if not of resounding phrases and flourish.

I felt interested in the social as well as the political side of the occasion. Mrs. Garfield's gown must have been quite elegant, if we trust the reporter's description . . . "rich black silk, with a mantle of black velvet, trimmed with fringe over her shoulders." The small green bonnet with ostrich feathers of the same shade on it must have been pretty. I like green with black, don't you?

How uplifted Madame Garfield, the dear old mother of the President, must have felt when she saw her son receive the highest honor his country could bestow and then felt his kiss on her forehead! The papers comment on his

saluting her first of all after taking the oath of office, as a very tactful thing as well as most touching.

The military display must have been stirring. Will compares all the pomp and circumstance of yesterday's proceedings with the scene eighty-one years ago when Jefferson, a solitary horseman on a bony nag, approached the capitol building, tied his steed to a fence rail, took the oath of office before a small group of people, and after unhitching his horse, rode away.

"Would you like to see President Garfield do the same thing today?" I asked Will. He replied promptly that it would, of course, be ridiculous. He added that it had always seemed to him a bit ridiculous in the great Jefferson, himself—dramatizing his appeal to the common people, rather than indulging in a genuine desire for simplicity.

There is much criticism in the Democratic press of the ceremonial pageantry of our inaugurations, and some writers profess to see in this an aping of royalty.

But as Will says, however much we may love simplicity, America is taking her place among the nations of the world and it is proper that we should mark such an occasion by a demonstration worthy of our position.

I heard one of our leading bankers, Orson Smith, say that there will probably be quite an advance in the stock market now.

Martha came in just before dinner, after having had a glimpse of the decorations at the Pullman house. She met Mrs. Pullman downtown and was delighted when she asked her to drive home with her and see the arrangements in the ballroom, where the Pullman children are having a party tonight. Martha is a little bit too old for an invitation to the dance, but was pleased to see the preparations. There is a lovely ballroom in the brown stone house at the corner of 18th street and Prairie avenue, and there is much social activity there.

In our own Rush street house tonight Martha is entertaining a small group of neighbors—young people of her own age—who are playing Commerce, a new game much favored in these parts. The players are out in the dining room where they can gather around the table, and from that quarter I hear often the mystic words: "My ship sails." At one stage of the game the "outs" try to make the "ins" break silence [which is forbidden]. In this event, I mean if the "out" is successful, he takes the other's cards and plays his hand out. It is quite a nice game for a large party.

MARCH 14.—I did not finish my letter and I see it is dated more than a week ago. It will seem stale to you, but I will add a few words and send it off. Isn't it perfectly terrible about the assassination of the czar of Russia? Lincoln's death, though it came by the hand of an assassin, doesn't seem so awful as if he had been mangled and torn by a bomb. How glad I am that such things are unknown in America!

The ruler who has passed so violently from the scene has had some good deeds to his credit, but his freeing of 23 million serfs seems not to have made him many friends. I suppose it was his second marriage—his morganatic alliance with the woman he had flaunted in the face of his czarina and their children—which has alienated his people. At any rate, that must have been a contributing cause.

I wonder if his son, who now ascends the throne, will be as unpopular. The new czarina, his wife, sister of the lovely princess of Wales, must dread the accession of her husband to power, for he will never feel safe. Their little son, too, will always be in danger. Don't you think, as you look at her picture, that she is strikingly like the princess of Wales? Those Danish princesses have made wonderful matches, haven't they?

Sandy was talking today to a man said to be the only native born Russian in business in Chicago. We have a few Russians here and no Russian consul, but the man with whom Sandy talked has lived here many years. He says the name nihilist, which we see so much in the papers now, has been invented, he thinks, since he left Russia, but it seems to mean one who would destroy all and rebuild nothing.

He was not surprised at the violent death of the czar, for he knew at first hand of the bitterness of the Russian people against the secret police, who are watching constantly to find some one to arrest. Then the accused person—sometimes guilty, sometimes only suspected—is haled to his doom. Our Chicago Russian said he had been playing cards one evening with some friends, when one of the party felt a touch on his shoulder. He looked up to find a member of the secret police bending over him.

"Bring your hat and coat and come with us," was the order. No use resisting, of course. His friends never saw him again, Sandy's informant said.

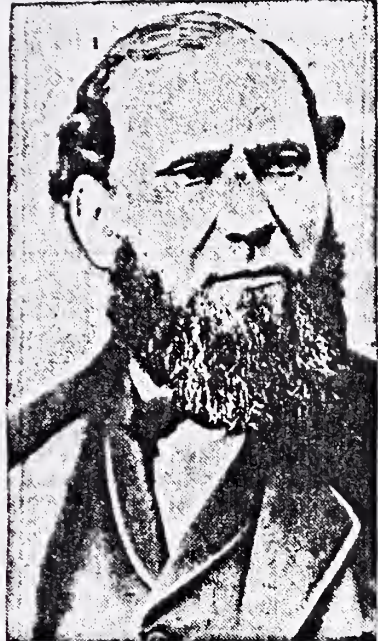
Will and I drove over to the west side today to call on Mr. and Mrs. Allan Pinkerton in their

handsome home on Ashland avenue. We had a most interesting visit recalling civil war days. Mr. Pinkerton, as you remember, was at the head of the secret service during the war and saved the life of President Lincoln. It is said, by discovering and foiling a plot to assassinate him when as President-elect he was on his way to Washington for the inaugural ceremonies. We saw many interesting photographs, including one taken by Brady in which Lincoln is shown standing with Mr. Pinkerton and Gen. McClelland in front of Mr. Pinkerton's tent.

Now I must close, for Michael is reining up the horses at the door and I don't like to keep him waiting. You should see his look of pride as he examines the harness, for he has just been polishing it. I must remember to compliment him on its looks.

Lovingly yours,

MARTHA FREEMAN ESMOND.



Allan Pinkerton, who guarded the life of President Lincoln during the civil war, was father of Mrs. William J. Chalmers of Chicago. In "When Chicago Was Young" Martha tells of a visit at the Pinkerton home.

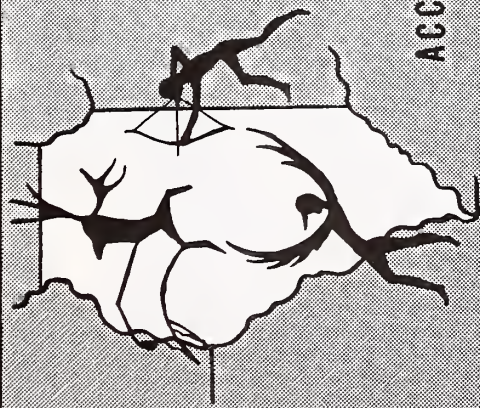
History's Who's Who

Pinkerton.

THE founder of the famous detective agency of this name was Allan Pinkerton. He was born near Glasgow, Scotland, of humble parentage, August 25, 1819. His father was a sergeant of the Glasgow police force. Left an orphan at an early age, he learned the trade of pattern-maker. He joined the Chartist Movement and was an advanced radical. In 1842 he married and emigrated to Canada. They were wrecked on the voyage, off Sable Island, and after reaching Montreal set out for Detroit by water, from whence they went on to Chicago in a wagon of their own. They were penniless on arrival, but Scotch friends helped their young countryman to earn his first American wages at the rate of 50 cents a day. Removing to Dundee, Ill., Pinkerton became an abolitionist and thus his sympathies were directed towards the Union cause from the first. While cutting poles on Bogus Island, for use in his cooperation, he unearthed the headquarters of a notorious counterfeiting gang. Pinkerton turned detective at once and ran down the whole band. His fame grew, and soon he was in the employ of H. C. Yates, Sheriff of Kane county, as a deputy, and later under Sheriff Church, of Cook county. He then successively was employed by the Illinois Central, the Rock Island and the old Galena & Chicago Union Railways. He also worked for the Pennsylvania, Baltimore & Ohio and other Eastern roads. It was Pinkerton who safely convoyed President Lincoln from Philadelphia to Washington on the way to his first inauguration. When the Civil War broke out Pinkerton became chief of the Secret Service and did splendid work for the Government. The original Pinkerton ideas were: No rewards, contingent or otherwise, but a stated per diem wage till the hunt was over; no gratuity. The agency never accepts divorce cases. Allan Pinkerton died in Chicago July 1, 1892.

File under: CONTEMPORARIES: Allan Pinkerton

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OUR COVER PICTURE



Allan Pinkerton



Pinkerton's "Villa" as it appeared in 1909.

There is a saying that every man's home is his castle. Near Onarga, Illinois, was the "castle" of Allan Pinkerton. From the very start of its construction, Pinkerton was the architect and engineer, a departure from the accepted custom of his day. Tireless and exacting in the supervision of the building, he shaped his home to fit a dream known only to him. He named his farm "The Larches," and money was lavished on it without expecting a penny in return. To beautify the drives and grounds, he imported 85,000 larch trees. Liking to talk about and relive the exciting days of the Civil War, he commissioned an outstanding Scotch artist to paint battle scenes and portraits of his wartime friends on the walls of a ball in "The Villa," as his house was called. He liked horses and instructed his sons, William and Robert, to buy any desirable horses they might see as they traveled about the United States. At one time, he had ten Shetland ponies, fifty western broncos and a number of Indian ponies and race horses. He built a depot along the Illinois Central track and, although it was only a half mile to the depot in Onarga, the train always stopped at his station to discharge or pick up his guests. For the entertainment of his guests, he built "The Saugery," a long oval building or pavilion over a huge wine cellar which was connected to the house by a tunnel. The walls of "The Saugery" were of canvas and painted with rural scenes of Scotland, his former home, and from the ceiling hung large portraits of Scotch heroes. Having a fondness for the fragrance and blossoms of the catalpa tree, he at one time converted 180 acres of "The Larches" into a catalpa plantation.

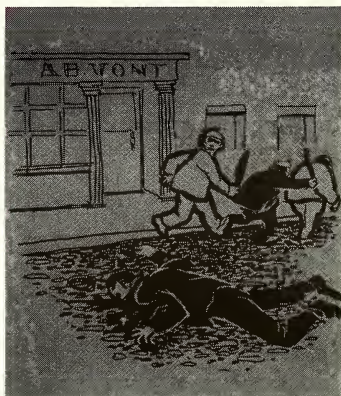
Pinkerton's projected dream for "The Larches" never ended; it stopped only with his death. He left a social impression on the Illinois prairie as unique in the world of his day as it is in the world today.



On August 25, 1819, the cries of a newborn baby were heard from the open window of a third-floor tenement building in Glasgow, Scotland. This tenement was located on the left bank of the River Clyde in a section called the Gorbals. The Scotch definition of Gorbals referred to greedy, very hungry, gluttonous people who seized things by violence; and this was true of the people who lived, packed from cellar to garret, along the narrow filthy streets. Danger, violence and crime were everywhere, and it was said that one dared not walk alone. The baby's parents were William Pinkerton and his wife, Isabella. As William was the blacksmith in the Gorbals, the Pinkertons were probably well known in this community. A few weeks later they took their new baby to the local Scotch Baptist Church where he was christened Allan.

Allan Pinkerton probably was busy during his early years helping his father around the blacksmith shop and doing what other boys his age did in the Gorbals. At the age of eighteen, in 1837, Allan Pinkerton became an apprentice to a cooper. A year later when he had finished his apprenticeship, he was made a member of the Cooper's Union in Glasgow. Wanting to see the world or escape from the Gorbals, he became an itinerant or "tramp cooper" who went about the beautiful Scotch countryside stopping at farmhouses here and there to make barrels, tubs, buckets and other woodenware.

In 1838, Allan returned to Glasgow where he became an important member of the "Chartist" movement which was sweeping Great Britain. The movement was composed mostly of members of newly formed labor unions who demanded that the King grant a charter which would entitle everyone to a good house to his taste, good clothing to keep him warm and his appearance respectable, plenty of good food to make him healthy, and drink to make him feel bappy. The "Chartist" movement was split into two



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factions, those wanting to talk things over and those wanting a revolution now. The leader of the radical group became Allan Pinkerton's hero; and in his leader's defense Allan became involved in incidents of street fighting and violence until the winter of 1842 when the King issued a warrant for his arrest and detention. Pinkerton's friends somehow learned in advance of the warrant and the price upon his head and arranged a secret hiding place before the police started their search for him.

During his association with the "Chartists," Pinkerton had been courting a girl who occasionally sang at their meetings. Her name was Joan Carfrae, and she was a member of the Bookbinder's Union. After several months, Joan became concerned about Allan and begged some of the union members to take her to him. Allan and Joan were secretly married in Glasgow on March 13, 1842, and about a month later, they were smuggled onto a ship bound for America.

After being shipwrecked on the coast of Nova Scotia, the new-lweds reached Chicago sometime in June, 1842, with only a few pennies between them. Pinkerton did not find Chicago to his liking. Hearing about a settlement of Scots on the beautiful Fox River with a village called Dundee (after a town in Scotland), he decided to go there and make the barrels, churns and tubs for the people. In the meantime Joan was to wait in Chicago until he could get a roof over their heads.

Pinkerton found the prospects better than he had hoped for and set about building a respectable cabin and shed in Dundee, not far from where the covered bridge crossed the Fox River. As soon as the buildings were completed, he returned to Chicago for Joan. The cabin was located in an excellent spot where all who passed could see the newly painted sign, "ALLAN PINKERTON - COOPER." Joan was delighted with her new home and loved the natural beauty of the river and the great expanses of prairie flowers. The little cabin, which served both as home and shop, echoed from dawn to dusk with the sound of Allan's hammer and his merry whistle. It was a good life for the hard-working Scot whose pocket now jangled with more than the few pennies he had on his arrival in America.

By 1847, the settlement had grown and the industrious barrel-maker now employed eight men in his cooper shop. It was during this same year that a small, seemingly unimportant event occurred; yet, as we look back over his life, it was at this time that we first sense the destiny that was to be his.

Since lumber for his barrels came from the vicinity of the Fox River, Allan Pinkerton often explored the river area for new or better sources. On one such occasion, while exploring an island, he found a cooking fire which indicated that someone was using the island. As there were few picnickers in those days, Pinkerton wondered what possible reason anyone could have for camping in such a remote place. His curiosity aroused, he returned to the island several times during the daytime but found no one. He then made several visits at night. Eventually his vigilance was rewarded with the unmistakable splash of oars, and by moonlight he watched a boat land on the island and several men go ashore. Pinkerton immediately notified Mr. Dearborn, the Sheriff of Kane County, of what he had seen. Later, Dearborn and Pinkerton led a posse to the island and succeeded in arresting a band of counterfeiters and horse thieves. Because of this event the island is still known locally as "Bogus Island."

Pinkerton's part in discovering, observing and arresting the gang was sensational, and it brought the industrious barrelmaker to the attention of the entire community. It wasn't too long after the capture of the counterfeiters that two of the local merchants visited his cooper shop and asked his help; they said they were sure there was a counterfeiter passing ten dollar bills in the settlement and that he was at that moment in the tavern waiting while the blacksmith shod his horse. Pinkerton explained that he was a barrelmaker and that this was the business of the sheriff, but they said the culprit would be gone by the time they found the sheriff and begged him to stop the counterfeiter from escaping. Pinkerton laid down his hammer, took off his leather apron, and strolled down the street to the blacksmith shop. He waited there until the man returned for his horse and engaged him in conversation. The man introduced himself as John Craig, a farmer. Pinkerton posed as a poor cooper who would not object to making a little money and gained Craig's confidence. He then bought several ten dollar bills for \$2.50 each and indicated that he would like to make an even larger purchase if it were possible. Craig indicated it could be arranged but that Pinkerton would have to meet him at a certain place in Chicago. Later, when the exchange took place in Chicago, the counterfeiter was met not only by Pinkerton but also by the Deputy Sheriff of Cook County who arrested Craig and found on his person the evidence he needed to convict him.



After the arrest of John Craig, things were never the same around Pinkerton's cooper shop. For one thing, everybody seemed to have problems requiring detective skill, and Sheriff Dearborn wanted Pinkerton to be his deputy. Pinkerton accepted this position, but he still maintained his cooperage shop, laying down his hammer only to join Sheriff Dearborn on an occasional chase after a horse thief, to serve court papers, or settle family affairs.

Pinkerton was a strong believer in freedom and sometime around 1847 became an abolitionist. His home became a station and he an agent on the underground railroad that carried runaway slaves from the southern states to freedom in Canada. His abolitionist activities embroiled him in a bitter church controversy which started with a fight and ended with deacons and elders lying sprawling in all directions. M. L. Wisner, pastor of the church, was a Southern sympathizer and falsely accused Pinkerton of being an atheist and selling ardent spirits. Pinkerton was put on trial in the Dundee Baptist Church and a jury of elders upheld Wisner's charges. This verdict led to Pinkerton's withdrawal from the church.



Chicago (from the West) about the time Allan Pinkerton became its first detective.

After the trial and apparent conviction, the Pinkertons felt a strained formality in the community. Many old friends no longer spoke to them. Barreling became monotonous, business declined and Pinkerton became more restless day by day. Therefore, when William Church, Sheriff of Cook County, offered him a deputyship, he accepted immediately, sold his business, packed their household goods on a wagon, and they left for Chicago.

In 1849, the newly elected Mayor of Chicago appointed Allan Pinkerton as Chicago's first detective. In 1853, while walking up Clark Street, a gunman fired at Pinkerton in the darkness, shattering his wrist. He recovered, however, and stayed on as detective for another year. He then resigned and became a Special United States Mail Agent to investigate the mounting series of postal thieveries in Chicago.

As Pinkerton walked the streets of Chicago, he saw from day to day the bulging growth of the city. It seemed there were more houses, more industries, more carriages, more people and more lawlessness. Pinkerton felt something in common with the growing city and knew firsthand from the Gorbals how lawlessness could take over a big city. Within Chicago's expanding nucleus, there was a place for him and for anyone who believed in vigorous, honest law enforcement.

At this time there were only two basic forms of law enforcement in America: The big-city police force which was politically dominated, undermanned and corrupt; and the farm or rural police force which consisted of houny hunters, marshals, sheriffs and deputies which were also, in many cases, politically dominated and undermanned but more indifferent rather than corrupt. Both forms of law enforcement, whether rural or big-city, operated within in jealously guarded jurisdictional boundaries. For example, a thief who stole a horse in Chicago was, as a rule, free if he could get beyond the city limits before a member of the Chicago Police Force caught him. Likewise, a thief who stole a horse from a farm in Cook County was, as a rule, free if he could get inside the city limits of Chicago before the Cook County Sheriff caught him. The same jurisdictional immunity applied also to criminals crossing all county and state lines. It is quite obvious that the lack of a central or federal law enforcement agency made escape, and even immunity, easy for the criminal and capture and conviction difficult for the various law enforcement agencies.

Sometime in the early 1850's Pinkerton and a young Chicago attorney, Edward R. Rucker, formed the North-Western Police Agency and established their headquarters in a small office on the corner of Dearborn and Washington streets in the heart of Chicago.

Although Allan Pinkerton was not the first man to establish a private detective agency in the United States, as is popularly believed, he did make a great historical contribution to his country's lawful social growth through the establishment of the first central law enforcement agency in America, an agency which still exists today. Pinkerton's agency was, in reality, the first national police force whose private operatives (agents or detectives) not only worked cooperatively with big-city police and rural agencies but moved freely across local, county, and state boundaries in their investigation and apprehension of criminals.

Pinkerton's Chicago agency was a success from the start and for a long time was considered one of the landmarks in the history of American business. A contract signed with the Illinois Central Railroad in 1856 included a \$10,000-a-year retainer fee for guarding the company's trains. On occasion, Pinkerton consulted with Illinois Central's vice-president and chief engineer, George B. McClellan, a dashing young West Pointer who was later to become Commanding General of the Army of the Potomac. He consulted also with the attorney for the line, a rawboned man from Springfield by the name of Abraham Lincoln who always had a humorous story to tell.



In 1858, Pinkerton again became caught up with his hatred of slavery, and his home on Adair Street in Chicago was often crowded with runaway slaves. Here also came such radical abolitionists as John Brown who was later captured and hung by the Confederacy.

On January 19, 1861, Pinkerton received a letter from Samuel Morse Felton, President of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad, asking him to come to New York City on a matter of great importance. At their New York meeting, Felton explained that he had received many threats of destruction and sabotage of his railroad, its track, trains, bridges and terminals, from Southern sympathizers in Baltimore who favored war and secession from the Union. Pinkerton immediately sent operatives to Baltimore.

On February 4, 1861, the Confederate States of America was formed and Jefferson Davis was elected President.

On Monday, February 11, 1861, President-elect Abraham Lincoln delivered his farewell address to the people of Springfield. This was the first of many public appearances on the way to his inauguration in Washington. As Abraham Lincoln's train rolled across New York State on its way to Albany, news came that Jefferson Davis, standing on the colonnaded portico of the Alabama State House, had taken the oath of office as President of the Confederacy and actress, Mollie Mitchell, had danced on the "Stars and Stripes." The people of the once "united" states began to choose up sides and show their hostility, as had Mollie Mitchell, and our nation was plunged into a period of great internal unrest and confusion.

When Abraham Lincoln arrived in Philadelphia, Pinkerton and Felton fought their way through the huge crowd to reach Norman Judd, one of Mr. Lincoln's friends who was in charge of the Presidential Party. Pinkerton explained to Judd that his operatives had found, while mingling with the crowds in taverns and restaurants, that most of the people in Baltimore were in a surly mood and were openly denouncing Lincoln and the Union. Pinkerton explained also that they had uncovered a plot to assassinate the President-elect and, furthermore, that Baltimore was the only city of any size that had made no formal preparation to receive Mr. Lincoln or send him any sort of official welcome. Pinkerton, Felton and Judd explained the situation to Mr. Lincoln and suggested that he abandon his schedule and take the train from Philadelphia to Washington that night. Mr. Lincoln refused. The next morning, however, after speaking in Philadelphia, Mr. Lincoln learned from another source about the plot against his life and reconsidered. Judd called Pinkerton and a security plan which Mr. Lincoln approved was put into operation. The plan called for Mr. Lincoln to proceed according to schedule, speaking that same afternoon at a banquet and meeting of the Pennsylvania Legislature in Harrisburg. That evening, after the dinner, he was to return secretly to



Diorama of President-elect Lincoln making his farewell speech to the people of Springfield from the rear coach of his inaugural train.

Philadelphia on a special train. Pinkerton met Mr. Lincoln's special train at a previously arranged place along the Pennsylvania Central Railroad tracks and took him personally by carriage to the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore depot in Philadelphia where one of Pinkerton's female operatives had reserved two sleeping coaches on the Washington-bound train for a sick friend and party. When the carriage drove up beside the sleeping cars with the drawn curtains, they were met by Ward H. Lamon, a former associate of Mr. Lincoln, who held out a bowie knife and pistol to Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln smilingly declined. This act offended the dignity and protective genius of Pinkerton and he became angry. Later he wrote, "I would not for the world have it said that Mr. Lincoln had to enter the Capitol armed. If fighting has to be done, it must be done by someone other than Mr. Lincoln." Their trip to Washington was uneventful and they arrived at 6:00 a.m. Pinkerton immediately dispatched a telegram to Judd who had remained in Philadelphia with Mrs. Lincoln; it was in code and read: "Plums arrived with nuts this morning."

Mr. Lincoln's secret arrival in Washington angered the news-men and increased the ridicule already being directed at him by a hostile press. A story invented by a New York Times reporter said that Mr. Lincoln wore a Scottish tam-o'-shanter and a long black military coat as a disguise. The correspondent admitted making up the story but, unfortunately, it was picked up by other

newspapers and circulated nationwide. Mr. Lincoln's enemies guffawed and derided his cowardice and several cartoonists drew caricatures depicting him in the disguise. Mr. Lincoln, himself, was not proud of the incident; had his friends not persuaded him that his welfare and that of the country were inseparable, he would have come through Baltimore as planned. Pinkerton's presumed knowledge of a plot to murder Mr. Lincoln in Baltimore was never proven. However, when Mrs. Lincoln, Judd, and the rest of the Presidential Party passed through Baltimore, they were subjected to oaths and obscenities; and at one point when the men attempted to close the windows to shut out the shouts of the mob surrounding Mrs. Lincoln's coach, the windows were forced open so that the very frightened wife of the President-elect could hear their dirty, foul language. A New York Times correspondent who witnessed the violent mob in Baltimore opened his story with this line, "It is well Mr. Lincoln went as he did—there is no doubt about it."



The Mr. Lincoln Member of Highland Regt., James Earle, March 20, 1861.



The New President of the United States, Venerly Earle, March 20, 1861.



The Flight of Abraham Lincoln's Kilted Bodyguard, March 20, 1861.



The figure in the foreground is believed to be a Pinkerton operative guarding a bridge during the Civil War. Picture by Matthew Brady.

Pinkerton, after delivering Mr. Lincoln to Washington, returned to Chicago and his business. A few weeks later, on April 12th, 1861, the Confederate States shelled Fort Sumter and on April 15th President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers. Pinkerton immediately sent a letter to President Lincoln, offering his service during the "disturbed state of affairs" and suggested a staff of sixteen to eighteen operatives to set up a sort of secret service to protect the President.

President Lincoln responded to his letter, and Pinkerton went to Washington. After waiting there for several days, he considered himself ignored; this offended him and he started back to Chicago. He stopped over in Philadelphia for the mail which had been forwarded to him from Chicago and found a letter from his

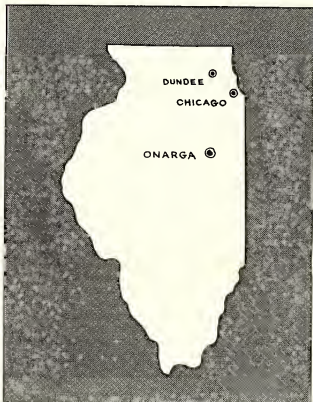


Allan Pinkerton, President Lincoln and General McClelland at Antietam.

old friend, the former vice-president of the Illinois Central Railroad, General George McClelland. McClelland was preparing to assume command of the new Military Department of the State of Ohio and he asked Pinkerton to come secretly at once to his headquarters at Cincinnati. Here he proposed the organization of a secret service for his Department. Pinkerton and one of his operatives set up headquarters in an office downtown. Soon he had a staff of experienced operatives in the field. Secrecy was the order of the day and Pinkerton became Major E. J. Allen, with his true name known only to General McClelland.

Soon General McClelland's interest shifted to the political war in Washington which was even more savage and ruthless than the one being fought in the field. When General McClelland became Head of the Army of the Potomac, Pinkerton became not only Chief of Secret Service of the Army of the Potomac but also McClelland's private political investigator and spent much of his time in Washington at the request of the General. As could be expected, neither the detective nor the General covered themselves with glory during the war years of 1861 to 1865.

In 1868, Pinkerton's friends began to notice a change in him; he became irritable, unreasonable and demanding. The image of Allan Pinkerton as the inexhaustible man of iron began to fade, and in the late summer of 1889, he suffered a stroke, almost fatal, which left him partially paralyzed and with a speech impairment. The operation of his agency was turned over to his sons, William and Robert. During the next year, however, Pinkerton made a heroic effort to recover his speech and the use of his limb. During this convalescence Pinkerton persisted in involving himself with business problems which invariably upset him. The doctors, therefore, advised him to become interested in something beside his business for a while if he wanted to regain his health.



In 1864, Pinkerton had purchased 254 acres of the grand prairie, located about one-half mile north of Onarga and bisected by the Illinois Central Railroad track. Sometime in the fall of 1873, construction of a house on this property was begun, and the people of Onarga often noticed a stocky man with an iron-gray beard tramping around the place, stopping at times to lean heavily on his walking stick to watch or to tell the carpenters how he wanted some part of the house built. It was a square building with porches on four sides and a cupola on top, modern in every way with eight rooms that opened into a hall that ran the full length of the house.

After the house was finished, roads and driveways were laid out all over the property. Pinkerton named his project "The Larches" and, according to legend, told Joan that he was going to plant thousands and thousands of larch trees. She is said to have replied that if he wanted the larch trees to remind him of Scotland it was all right, but that there must also be fields of prairie flowers such as she remembered around their little cabin in Dundee. Pinkerton telegraphed his New York office to buy the larch trees. When the general manager informed him that he had been unable to find any in the United States, Pinkerton telegraphed back: "Then cable Scotland and order them." In due time a shipload of 85,000 larch trees arrived in New York and were unloaded on the dock. Arriving during a bitter cold spell, the entire shipload froze on the dock. The manager of the New York office telegraphed Pinkerton that his trees had frozen because of the neglect of a drunken agent. To this, Pinkerton replied, "Fire the agent and send to Scotland for another boatload of trees." Sometime late that summer the trees arrived on a special Illinois Central train, and his gardeners planted them along the roads and driveways.

The estate was growing. The house was now called "The Villa." Two huge barns, the largest in the country, were built along with a greenhouse, icehouse, carpenter shop, paddock, fishing pond, and a little depot along the railroad tracks which ran through the estate.

One of Pinkerton's favorite pastimes was reliving the events of the Civil War. Desiring to immortalize those events so dear to him and the people who shared them with him, he commissioned Paul Loose, a famous Scotch artist, to come to America to do a series of murals or panels for the hallway of "The Villa." After working for about two years, Mr. Loose completed the following paintings: "The Battle of Gettysburg," "Sherman's March to the Sea," "McClellan and his Staff," "Bull Run," "Conewago Bridge," and "The Secret Service Staff of the Army of the Potomac." Over each door Mr. Loose painted portraits of the men Pinkerton knew; included were McClellan, Lincoln, Grant, Sherman and others.



Early photograph of "The Villa."

"The Larches" was now quite a showplace and probably one of the most unusual in America due to Pinkerton's personal taste and touch. Hardly a week passed that he did not bring a group of important people down from Chicago to be entertained over the weekend. For the entertainment of his male guests, he built a special building which he called "The Snuggery." This was used as a wine or drinking pavilion, a low oval structure which sat over a huge wine cellar. The sides of "The Snuggery" were of canvas on which Paul Loose had painted the rural scenery of Scotland. These could be rolled up in warm weather to admit the prairie breezes. From the ceiling of "The Snuggery" hung paintings of



Larches along the west road leading to "The Villa."

great Scotch heroes. The wine cellar was connected with the house by a fifty-foot tunnel. This was not the whim of an eccentric old man but rather to protect Pinkerton from unnecessarily exposing himself as there had been several attempts on his life by hired assassins. Each of the three main entrances to the estate had a little guard house with a uniformed armed guard; and stationed in the cupola on top of "The Villa" were expert riflemen whose duty it was to scan the countryside in search of trespassers and assassins. It was also claimed that Pinkerton always slept with a six-shooter within easy reach.

Pinkerton was a very enthusiastic man in everything he did. Liking horses, at one time he kept ten Shetland ponies, fifty western broncos and an indefinite number of Indian ponies and race horses. He once became interested in the flowering catalpa tree and turned 180 acres of "The Larches" into a catalpa plantation. There were several hundred cast-iron and stone statues scattered over the estate. These were painted white, and Pinkerton's guests, mounted on horses, would ride at breakneck speed and fire at them, accuracy of the marksman being established by the number of places where the bullets chipped the paint. Weekends were often big events for the townspeople of Onarga who walked up the Illinois Central tracks to watch Pinkerton's weekend guests descend from their private Pullman car. It was always a gay crowd, and sometimes a guest of national importance, such as General Grant, would be among the group. Upon arrival they were whisked away to "The Villa" in one or several of Pinkerton's shining carriages with the prancing horses and coachmen in livery.



Mural, by Paul Loose, of the "Battle of Gettysburg."



"If I had I was getting my fortune told the Pinkertons, I'd tell her, and she'd tell me."

Illustration from Pinkerton's book, *The Gypsies and The Detectives*.

Despite the now worldwide operation of his detective agency and its great financial success, the year 1880 found Pinkerton slowly deteriorating physically. His peace and serenity had been disturbed by Joan, Robert and William who, after years of submission to his tyrannical rule, finally rebelled. There were, however, several things he did which he enjoyed. One was outlining and writing the details of some of his most famous cases; these were turned over to writers who expanded his material into an acceptable literary work of the day. His first book, *The Expressman and the Detective*, published by Keen, Cook and Company in Chicago in 1874, was regarded as an unparalleled success in the publishing field and its sale at \$1.50 per copy reached 15,000 copies in less than sixty days after publication. The publisher immediately clamored for more and Pinkerton obliged with seventeen. As his books were best-sellers during the 1870's and 1880's, he was regarded as an important literary figure of the day. The books (now collectors' items) were full of lurid Victorian melodrama, but the

PREFACE TO GYPSIES.

Yours possessing the public, and comprising all my experience as a Detective, have been of great service to me, and I am sure will be of great service to you. I have been a long time in the field, and I have seen many of the most famous cases of the past, and I have seen many of the most famous cases of the present. I have seen many of the most famous cases of the past, and I have seen many of the most famous cases of the present. I have seen many of the most famous cases of the past, and I have seen many of the most famous cases of the present.

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investigative techniques were all Pinkerton's. The books were well illustrated, bound, and stamped in gold with the trademark of his detective agency which was the eye and the slogan, "We never sleep." Another source of pleasure was his trees; and during the closing days of his life he spent many hours walking beneath the beautiful larches. Also, the paintings in "The Villa" brought back memories of the excitement of the War and of some of his friends with whom he had shared it . . . everywhere he looked, there were memories of a better day.

Allan Pinkerton, stubbornly trying to walk while sick with malaria, fell sometime in June of 1884 and never regained consciousness . . . he died on the afternoon of July 1, 1884.

Pinkerton's last will and testament was filed in Cook County on July 10, 1884. In his will he bequeathed his property to his wife, Joan, his books, royalties and copyrights to his daughter, Joan, and the agency to his sons, Robert and William. There was also another request in the will . . . that "The Larches" be worked and kept in its present condition for seven years and then another seven and, if possible, remain in the family forever.

In the end, it was "The Larches" that represented Pinkerton's greatest possession, the one he wished most to preserve through the ages as a living memorial.



Today, "The Villa" (recently repaired) sits alone on the prairie with the last three surviving larch trees.

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RESEARCH ASSISTANCE:

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God bless and . . . keep you

Hollywood guessed wrong on roles

Pinkerton secret files make interesting reading

By JOHN CORRY

©New York Times News Service

NEW YORK — Pinkerton's, the oldest and largest private security company in America, hardly ever chases desperadoes anymore, although it still keeps files on the desperadoes it once did.

Pinkerton's does not do this because it is sentimental; it does it because of history. The desperadoes' names have come down through the years.

There is, for example, Jesse James. He was never a nice man, even though the legends have been kind to him, and Tyrone Power played him in a movie.

Jesse James's file takes up a full drawer in Pinkerton's archives, and for years Pinkerton men were obsessed with the idea of capturing him. James, in turn, was obsessed with the Pinkertons.

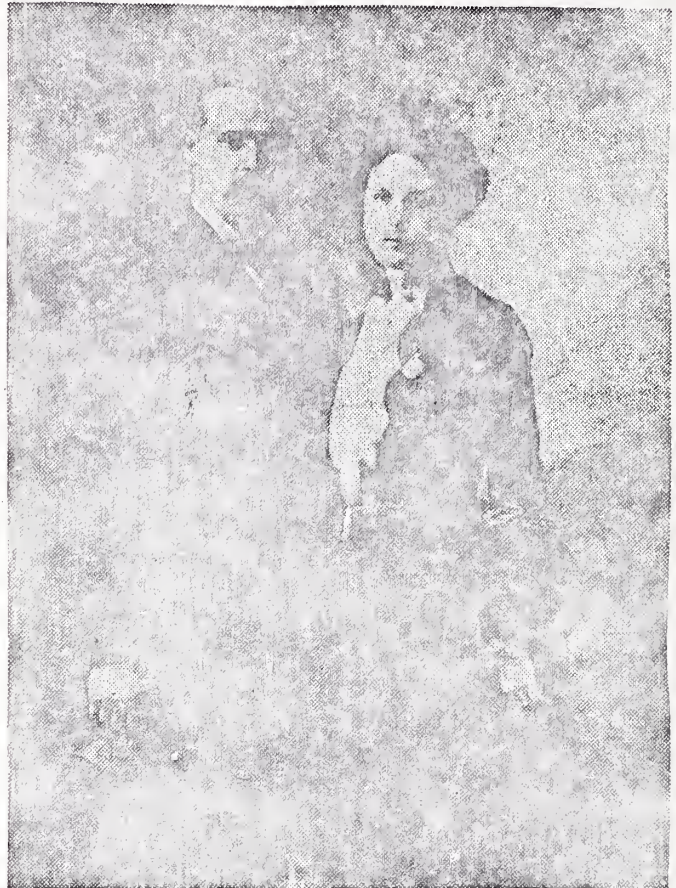
"I know God some day will deliver Allan Pinkerton into my hands," James is supposed to have said. Allan Pinkerton, a Scotch immigrant, was the founder of Pinkerton's and God never did deliver him into James's hands. Instead, Jesse James was shot by a man called Bob Ford, who was not, however, a Pinkerton.

Pinkerton's is now 125 years old, and most of the 37,000 employees wear uniforms and do things like guarding buildings and apartments, looking out for muggers and vandals, and handling crowds. Few of them are detectives.

By almost everyone's estimate, the most romantic bandit in the Pinkerton archives is Butch Cassidy.

The legends have been kinder to him than to Jesse James, and Paul Newman got to play him in a movie. Cassidy is supposed to have been a jovial man, but he did not like the Pinkertons any more than James did.

"They're always one step behind me; that's why I have



The innocent look

This photo, obtained by Pinkerton's, shows Harry Longabaugh, better known as the Sundance Kid, and Etta Place in New York in 1902. Both were members of the Wild Bunch, headed by George Parker, better known as Butch Cassidy. The Pinkerton file on Etta Place is still open because she was never caught. She would have been 104 years old last week. — New York Times photo.

to always keep moving," Cassidy said. He meant Frank Dimaio, the Pinkerton who followed him to South America. Cassidy and his pal, the Sundance Kid, died there.

Cassidy's real name was George Parker. The Sundance Kid's real name was Harry Longabaugh. Their girlfriend's name was Etta Place.

Theoretically, Pinkerton's files on Etta Place are still open because she was never caught. She would now be 104 years old.

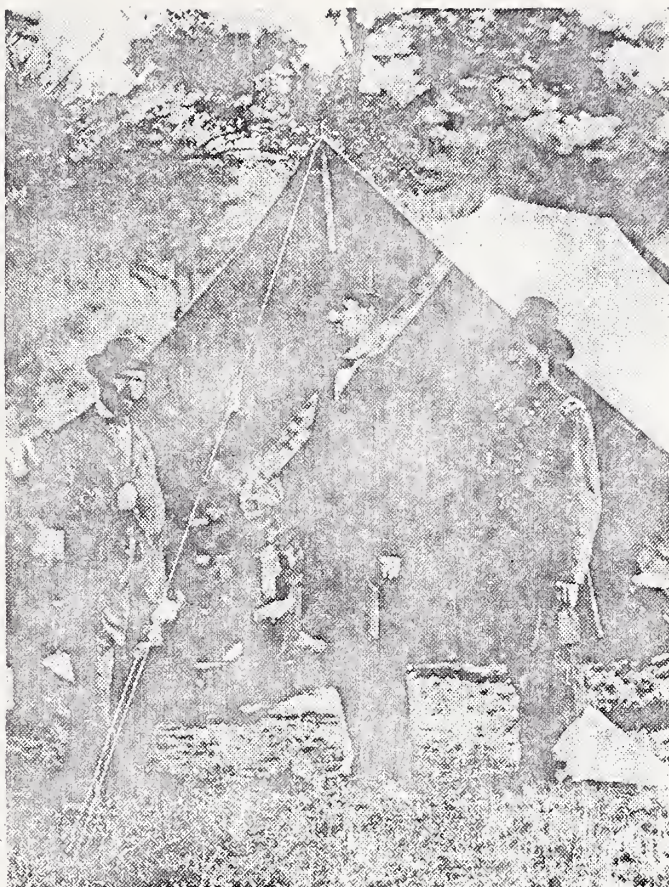
Photographs in the Pinkerton archives, which are not open to the public, show that Newman may have been miscast when he played Butch Cassidy. Newman looks more like the Sundance Kid.

One photograph, taken here in 1902, shows him and Etta Place, posed solemnly and respectfully, staring into the camera. They look as if they were on their way to church.

Perhaps the most famous photograph of all in the Pinkerton files is one that Matthew Brady took in 1862. It shows Lincoln, one of his generals and Allan Pinkerton standing in front of a tent. Pinkerton seems to be reaching for a gun.

In a way, Lincoln was Pinkerton's best client. Allan Pinkerton foiled a plot to assassinate him, and the grateful President allowed Pinkerton to run his Secret Service during the Civil War.

Hollywood made a movie about that, too, and Dick Powell got to play Allan Pinkerton. There was no resemblance at all.



A famous photo

This is one of the most famous photos in Pinkerton's archives, taken by Matthew Brady in 1862 and seen many times by Civil War buffs. At left is Allan Pinkerton with President Lincoln, and one of his generals at a Union army camp at Antietam, Va. Lincoln allowed the founder of the agency to run his Secret Service system during the war. — New York Times photo.

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